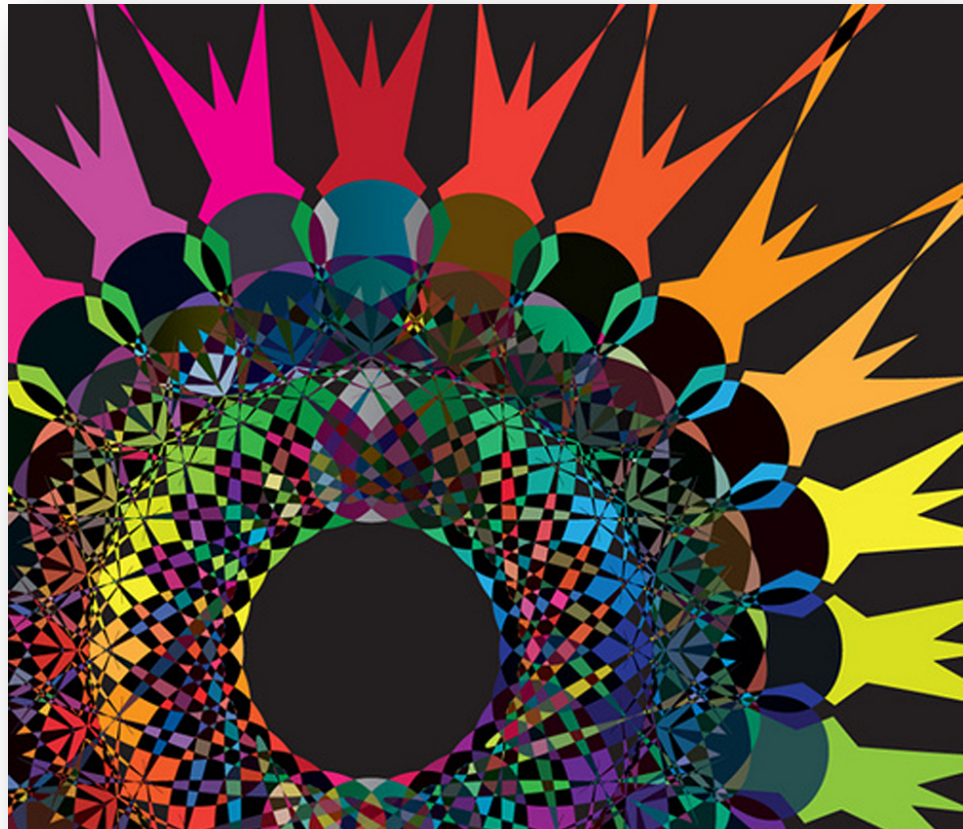


ROUTINE WRITING TASKS TO SUPPORT COMPREHENSION AND ANALYSIS



8/1/12

Writing Activities Aligned to Common Core Standards

This set of writing tasks, aligned with Common Core standards and instructional expectations, supports students' reading comprehension, analysis, and vocabulary skills.

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Routine Writing Tasks to Support Comprehension and Analysis

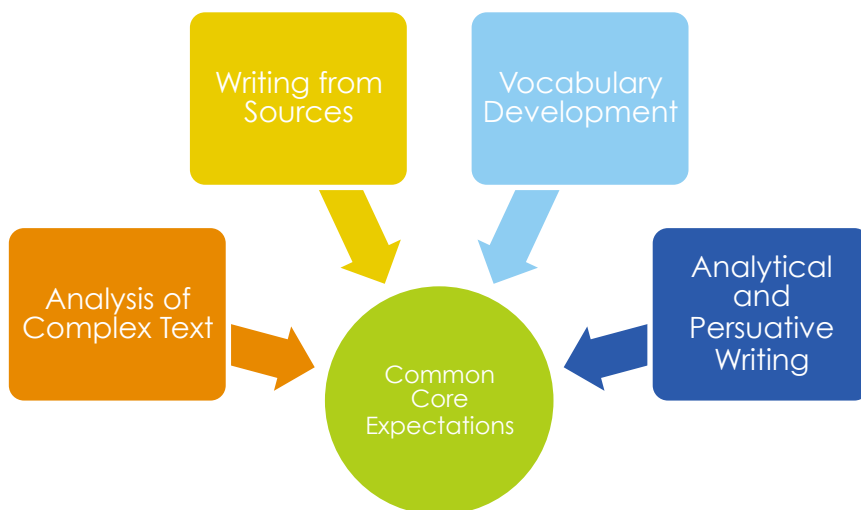
WRITING ACTIVITIES ALIGNED TO COMMON CORE STANDARDS

This set of writing tasks, aligned with Common Core standards and instructional expectations, supports students' reading comprehension, analysis, and vocabulary skills. Included for each activity is a rationale in terms of Common Core standards, suggestions for routine use, and reproducible pages in color and black and white that teachers can share with students or use as classroom posters.

INTRODUCTION

The Common Core standards emphasize that, in our classrooms, we need to engage students in the study of rich text, using worthy literature and informational text to develop reading comprehension, critical thinking, analysis, and vocabulary skills. The Common Core standards also require us to teach students to use their understanding of text to justify and support their claims.

Honestly, it's about time that we hold ourselves to this standard as educators, but one challenge inherent in the Common Core is that we find ways to ensure our students are given the supports they need to work with grade-level appropriate texts...not just texts that are at their level.



The activities included in this set provide you with opportunities to engage students routinely in writing from sources, developing their abilities to analyze complex text, and think critically. These activities also provide you with useful scaffolds to develop students' persuasive and analytical writing skills.

Please note that alignment to Common Core standards is expressed in terms of the *anchor standards*, as these activities are useful across grade levels. Teachers will want to cite specific grade-level expressions of the standards in their plans.

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Freewriting	4
Text Annotation	8
Dialogue Journal.....	12
Significance Statement	17
Process Log.....	22
Drama Log	27
Rhetorical Appeals	31
Cartoon Chapter.....	36
Character Map.....	39
Film Viewing Notes.....	42
Documentary Viewing Notes.....	45
Text Connections	48
Vocabulary Connections.....	53

FREEWRTING

Description

Freewriting is a timed writing exercise in which students write without stopping, editing, or crossing out. Students can use a writing journal to contain their freewriting for the class and should be taught to write as fast as they can without stopping, taking their pen off the paper, or self-censoring with worries about grammar, logic, or content. During freewriting, if students get stuck or cannot think of what to write, they should be taught to repeat the prompt or write something like, “I don’t know what to write, but I’ll think of something soon.” Students should not worry about transitions or writing conventions during a freewrite. The important thing is for students to keep their pens moving.

Following freewriting, the teacher can facilitate a sharing discussion of the students’ responses. During this discussion, student volunteers should read what they have written during the freewrite. Other students and the teacher should not share evaluative comments, but can ask follow up questions to deepen class discussion.

Alternately, freewriting responses may be shared round-robin style without comment. In this scenario, all writers, including the teacher, should be invited to read their freewriting pieces.

Rationale

Freewriting allows you to establishing writing as a routine and painless activity in your classroom, and, because it requires students to commit their emerging thoughts to paper, writing becomes a way of *thinking*.

Freewriting gives students space in which to think and respond, ensuring that *all* students are accountable for a unique response. When students freewrite prior to a discussion, for example, no student can say “My idea is the same” as the student who just responded.

For students who are daunted by a blank page or who experience writer’s block, freewriting provides an experience of quickly filling a page without stopping and without worrying about whether what comes out is “good enough.” Freewriting fostered uninhibited thought, helping students learn to bypass the inner critic that can stifle ideas before they can emerge.

Suggestions for Using this Activity

- Hook students’ interest or prior knowledge related to a text by giving them a freewriting prompt before reading.
- Freewrite definitions related to key concepts and ideas (e.g. What is a myth?) at the beginning of a unit of study to establish common understanding.
- Have students freewrite their beginning understanding of a text, focusing on how they make sense of it (see Process Log, page 22).
- Have students freewrite in response to an open-ended question that invites analysis before engaging in whole-group discussion.
- Freewrite at the beginning of every class as a way of getting students’ brains in gear and creative thinking flowing.

- Make freewriting the first step in the writing process and teach students to freewrite their initial responses to an essay prompt. The central idea that emerges during freewriting can be refined into a thesis statement or claim.
- Have students freewrite about what is similar and different in two different texts (or a text and a film) that deal with the same topic.
- Create opportunities for students to have fun with language. Use freewriting prompts that take writers outside of themselves and involve them in word play, imagining scenarios, inventing characters, and writing about situations involving others.
- Use freewriting to build opportunities for personal writing with prompts such as “I am...” or “The best meal I ever ate...”

Standards Alignment

Writing Anchor Standard 10 articulates that students should engage in writing for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

W.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Freewriting can also be used as a first step to support the production of arguments, informative / explanatory texts, and narratives and thus relates to Anchors Standards 1-3 for Writing.

FREEWriting

TIMED WRITING

What it is:

- Writing without stopping.
- Keeping your hand moving.
- Writing whatever is in your mind.

What it is not:

- Editing for grammar or spelling.
- Censoring your thoughts.
- Being overly logical.

FREEWriting

What it is not:

TIMED WRITING

What it is:

- Editing for grammar or spelling.
- Censoring your thoughts.
- Being overly logical.

- Writing without stopping.
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TEXT ANNOTATION

Description

When books and text materials *can* be marked up, students should be taught to annotate using a useful set of response codes.

Annotation is a skill used by most good readers, who may underline or highlight books and articles as well as make notes in the margins to flag questions, keep track of motifs, mark something that seems particularly important or interesting, and return to new vocabulary words.

Text annotation is a simple and powerful tool for interacting with and making sense of complex text, yet students in public schools are often discouraged from learning and employing this tactic. If at all possible, work with copies of texts that students can mark up and own, as text annotation is a simple, flexible, and powerful strategy for supporting reading comprehension.

Rationale

Text annotation promotes active and engaged reading. When students annotate their texts, they are able to mark passages that confuse them or that they are wondering about, allowing them to go back after reading to clarify areas of potential misunderstanding. Similarly, routine text annotation encourages students to highlight new or unfamiliar words which helps to reinforce vocabulary acquisition.

Annotation empowers students to mark passages that they feel are significant or interesting, allowing them to reflect on and later explicate that significance.

Perhaps most important, text annotation provides a means to teach students to search for text evidence that they will later use to construct meaning and support their analyses.

Suggestions for Using this Activity

- Use text annotation with both literary and informational texts.
- Teach students to underline significant quotations and annotate in text margins using a generic coding strategy.
- Use a focused annotation strategy to direct students' attention toward areas of the text that establish a central tension or that support students' understanding of literary terms (e.g. characterization, mood, tone).
- Make text annotation a first step before students write in dialogue journals.
- Teach students to infer logical meaning from their text annotations.
- Assign text annotation as an independent "scaffolded second reading" of a text following a read aloud to the whole class.
- Teach students to mark passages that highlight author's purpose.
- Teach students to mark passages that highlight the author's central claim and supporting evidence.

- If annotating directly in text is not possible, modify the technique by having students annotate on sticky notes or flags and stick their notes onto the page.

Standards Alignment

At its most simplified, the Common Core asks us to teach students to “read like a detective.”

In this context, text annotation is directly aligned with reading standards for literature and informational text that ask students to cite textual evidence as well as with writing standards that ask students provide evidence from and analysis of source material.

R.1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

W.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Text annotation is also indirectly aligned with reading standards for literature and informational text that ask students to analyze content and interpret the meaning and context of new words. In addition, text annotation aligns to writing standards that ask students to support their interpretations and analysis with valid reasoning and relevant text evidence.

R.2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

R.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

W.1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

W.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

TEXT ANNOTATION

Focused Annotation

Text Coding

While you read, mark your text using the following symbols:

Coding Strategy

✓	Confirms your understanding
✗	Contradicts your understanding
?	Raises a question
??	Confuses you
*	Seems important
!	Seems new or interesting
<div>Word</div>	Box new vocabulary and words that are repeated or seem important

While you read, mark the text for places where:

- You see inherent tension in the text [e.g. places where the main character seems to feel strong (S); places where the main character seems to feel despair (D)]
- You see places in the text that establish characterization (C), mood (M), tone (T), etc.
- You find significant imagery (I)
- You can identify symbolism (S)
- You can identify irony (I)

TEXT ANNOTATION

Focused Annotation

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- You find significant imagery (I)
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- You can identify irony (I)

DIALOGUE JOURNAL

Description

In a dialogue journal students are invited to “talk back” to the text, explicating the significance of quotations, asking questions based on a particular passage, keeping track of and explicating emerging motifs, and writing down new vocabulary words.

Dialogue journals can be kept easily using facing pages of a composition notebook. Alternately, students can use a folded piece of notebook paper to create the two columns necessary for both writing down a passage from the text and commenting on that passage.

Students should be taught to record the page number where a passage can be found, creating a usable record for later analytical writing tasks and reinforcing the importance of citations.

Rationale

Dialogue journals are analytically focused and rigorous, promoting individual students’ accountability for reading and interpreting text as well as coming to a discussion prepared.

Dialogue journals extend students’ work with text annotations and promote further analysis of the text. By requiring students to dialogue routinely with the texts they are reading and recording their observations and rationale, we support students in building a full range of reading comprehension and analysis skills.

Some teachers use dialogue journals to engage in written reflection and interaction between students and teachers. Used in this context, a dialogue journal allows students to write and teachers to respond within the journal. This kind of dialogue journal has an entirely different rationale for instructional use and is generally not as academically and analytically focused.

Suggestions for Using this Activity

- Have students choose a limited number of their text annotations and copy the passage into their dialogue journals on the left side of the page. On the right side, have students comment on the passage, exploring what they think the passage means or asking questions.
- Make dialogue journals routine homework.
- Use dialogue journals as formative assessment.
- Use dialogue journals during novel studies.
- During class discussion, have students share a quotation and their analysis from their dialogue journals. Other students who have chosen the same passage can share their analyses, extending and deepening the class’s interpretation of the text.
- Record unfamiliar words and phrases. Write a definition, interpret new words as they are used in context, and comment on connotation.
- Comment on how point of view or author’s purpose is reflected in specific passages.

- Comment on how passages in the text relate to illustrations or other graphic representations.
- Isolate and evaluate specific claims made in a text.
- Use dialogue journals to reinforce the importance of citations and teach students about plagiarism.
- Use dialogue journals to teach students how to paraphrase text effectively.
- Have students re-read their dialogue journals during the writing process. Quotations that they have previously annotated can be used as a starting place for analytical writing.

Standards Alignment

In addition to asking us to teach students to “read like a detective,” the Common Core asks us to teach students to “write like a detective,” interrogating text and building evidence to support their analyses.

The dialogue is directly aligned with reading standards for literature and informational text that ask students to cite textual evidence as well as with writing standards that ask students provide evidence from and analysis of source material.

R.1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

R.10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

W.8: Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

W.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

W.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

When dialogue journals are used as a starting place for class discussion, they directly align with anchor standards for speaking and listening.

SL.1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL.4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Dialogue journals can be used to support the remaining anchor standards for reading. Depending upon the text to which students are responding and the specific directions provided by the teachers, use of dialogue journals may align to the full range of reading proficiencies for both literary and informational text.

R.2: Determine central ideas or themes or a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

R.3: Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

R.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

R.5: Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g. a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

R.6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

R.7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

R.8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

R.9: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Dialogue journals are also indirectly aligned with writing standards that ask students to support their interpretations and analysis with valid reasoning and relevant text evidence.

W.1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

W.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

W.5: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

DIALOGUE JOURNAL

What you say:

What the book says:

Use the left-hand side of your composition notebook to record:

- Quotations
Include passages that “resonate” even if you’re not sure why they seem meaningful or significant.
- Images
- Details of plot, character, setting
- Observations
- Summaries

Use the right-hand side of your composition notebook to discuss and analyze:

- Connect to your own life.
- Write any questions that come to mind.
Begin to think and write about possible answers to your own questions.
- Comment on patterns.
- Interpret quotations.
- Write about the story’s assumptions of its reader.
Write a description of the kind of reader the passages create and assume.

DIALOGUE JOURNAL

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What the book says:

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Write a description of the kind of reader the passages create and assume.

SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

Description

Significance Statements are brief (no more than one page) and allow students to summarize what they have learned about the text through the lens of a particular quote that they have chosen as “the most important” or “the most significant” to them.

For a significance statement, students begin by choosing a quotation (a line or two of poetry or a passage of at least a few lines from a prose work) that they find especially meaningful and write it down or type it at the top of the page.

Students then proceed to explain the context briefly. Who is speaking? Is this character speaking to someone else? What has happened in the story or poem that leads up to this quotation?

After grounding the reader in context, students move on to the heart of the significance statement and explain their chosen quotation’s relationship to the work as a whole. Does this quotation capture one of the themes in the text? Is it part of any particular patterns of imagery or symbolism (motifs) that are important in the work? Why is this quote particularly meaningful or effective for you?

Rationale

Significance statements teach students the fine art of explicating text evidence. Often, when students begin using quotations as text evidence, they make a claim and then “back it up” by writing down a quotation next, failing to explain what the connection is between the claim and the chosen text evidence. Significance statements teach students to establish context which grounds a reader and to extend their analysis of the quotation in relation to their particular claim.

Suggestions for Using this Activity

- Use significance statements as summative assessments following whole-class inquiry into each text. Especially when a unit summative assessment is an analytical essay spanning multiple texts, a significance statement provides a brief summative assessment of a student’s comprehension and analysis of an individual text.
- Use significance statements to explore how informational texts organize and analyze complex ideas and/or establish authority and credibility (See Rhetorical Appeals).
- Use significance statements to establish a comprehensive reading inventory or portfolio that each student maintains over the course of a full year of instruction.
- Refine or adapt significance statements into the analytical essay assigned at the conclusion of the unit.
- Publish significance statements through oral sharing in class or through electronic publication on class blogs.

- Start class when significance statements are due by asking students what quotations they chose and making a visual record of the variety of specific quotations. This is an opportunity to ask the class if anyone got the “right” quotation and discuss the validity of the range of quotes that students have chosen as significant.
- Have the students read and share their significance statements aloud, either in a whole-class setting or in smaller groups. Students can be grouped together if they chose the same quotation to write about. Students can be grouped with different quotations.
- Use think-pair-share or larger groups and ask another student to restate or paraphrase the rationale and justification that the writer of a significance statement used to support his or her quotation.
- Discuss the similarities and differences between rationales and justification for students who have written about the same or similar quotations.
- Use significance statements on larger summative examinations like midterms and final exams. In this context, a teacher chooses a larger number of quotations from the full range of reading that students have completed over the period. Students should be given the option to choose a more limited number of quotations for which to write significance statements.

Standards Alignment

Significance statements are directly aligned with reading and writing standards that ask students to support their interpretations and analysis with valid reasoning and relevant text evidence.

W.1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

W.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

W.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

W.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

W.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

R.1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

R.2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

R.10: Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

When significance statements are used as a starting place for class discussion, they directly align with anchor standards for speaking and listening.

SL.1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL.2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

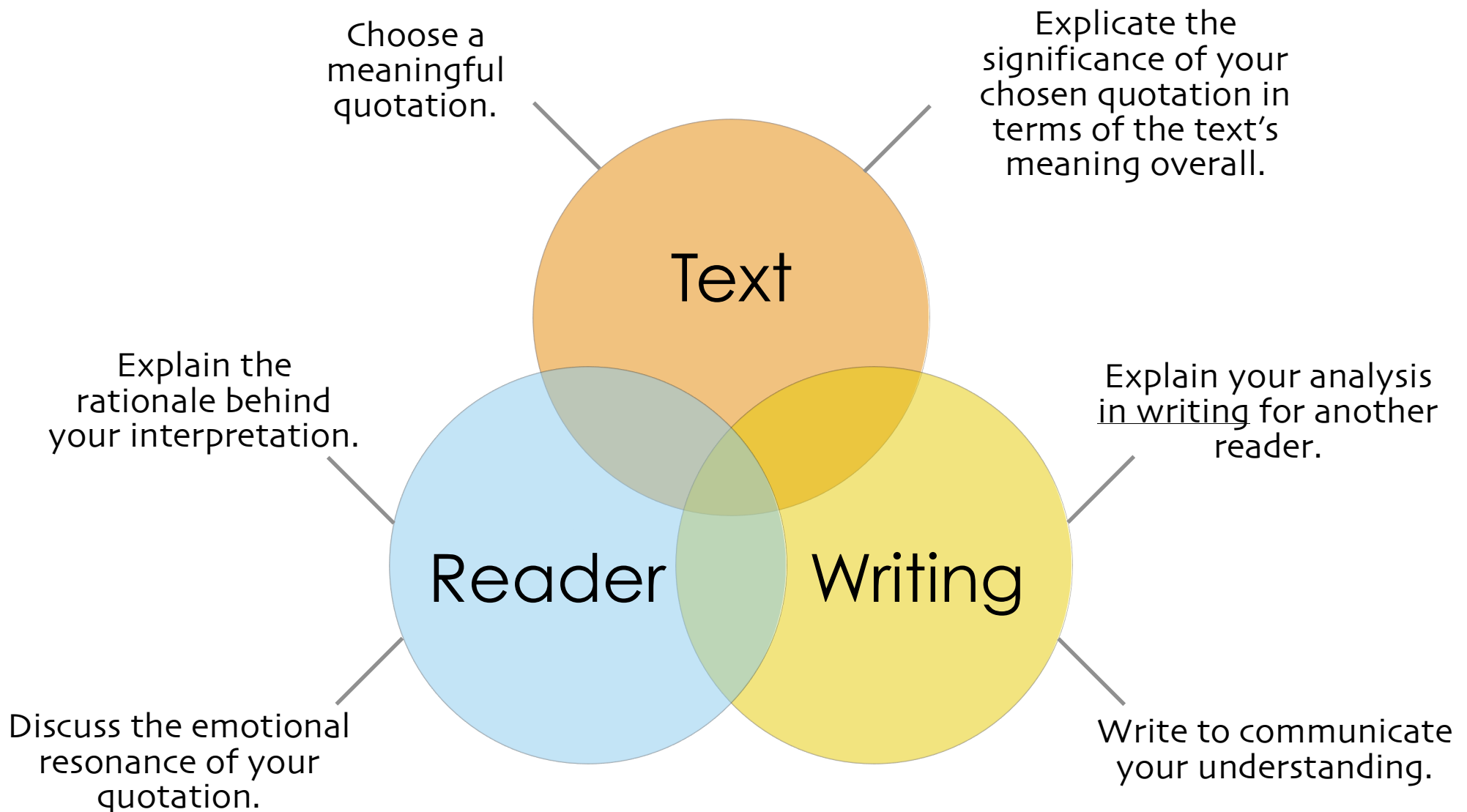
SL.4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

When significance statements are used as a starting place for more sustained analytical or informational writing, and/or when they are published electronically, this activity relates directly to additional anchor standards for writing.

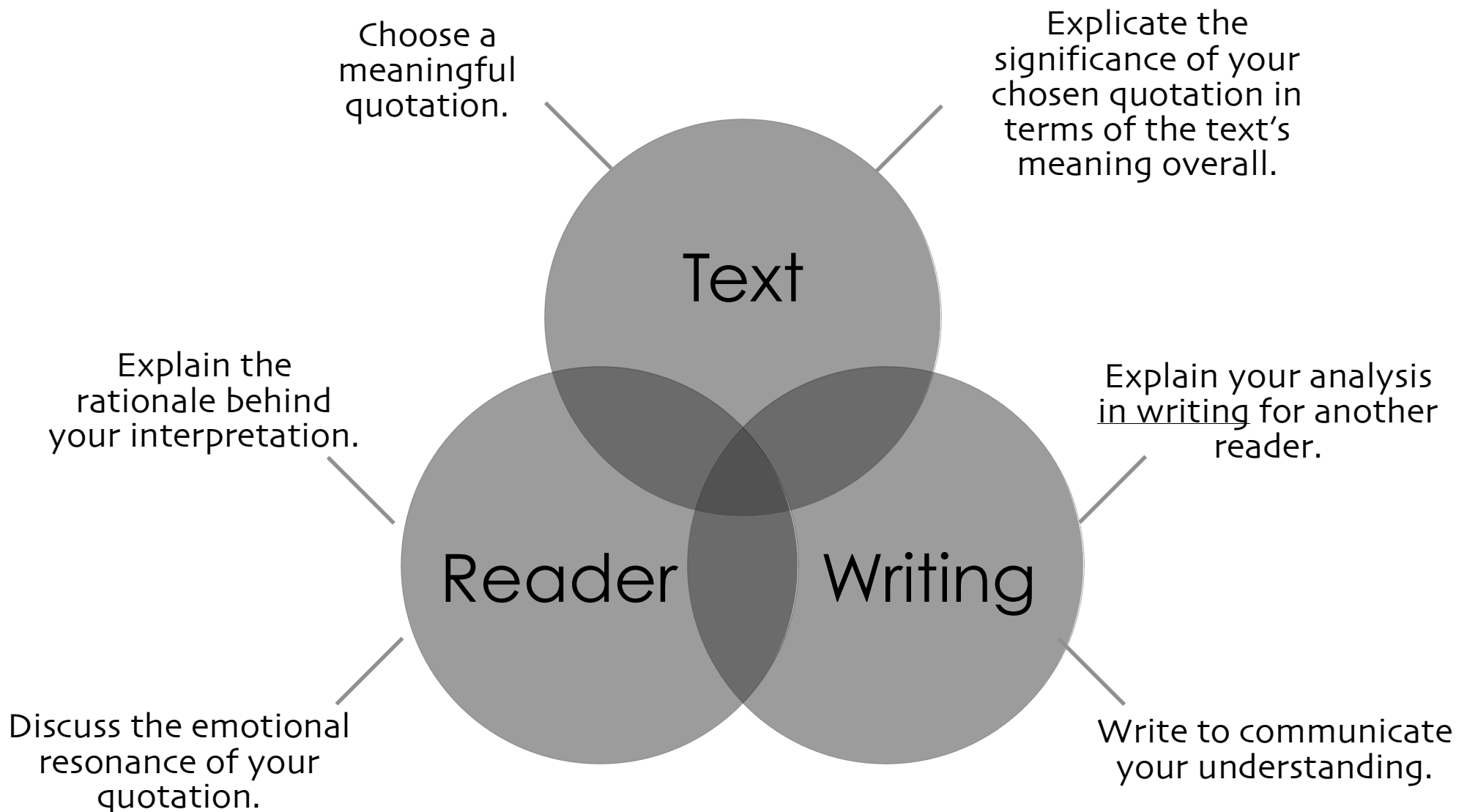
W.5: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

W.6: Use technology, including the internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENTS



SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENTS



PROCESS LOG

Description

A process log incorporates freewriting, where students respond to prompts that ask them to discuss what they have read, *what they understand* from the text, and *how they have come to that understanding* based on specific words, phrases, or other features of the text.

Rationale

Process logs help students focus on and articulate their own thinking, providing an opportunity to teach and reinforce meta-cognition. Meta-cognition is an important aspect of critical thinking, as the skill allows students to take more active control over the thinking processes engaged in learning and making sense of complex text.

Process logs are particularly useful when students are trying to make sense of poetry, which relies on figurative language as well as structure to convey meaning. Process logs are also useful when students are engaged in rhetorical analysis of complex text, as it allows them to analyze an author's purpose in employing various rhetorical appeals and structures, as well as their reaction to the author's rhetorical strategy.

Suggestions for Using this Activity

- Use process logs to help students make sense of poetry.
- Use process logs to help students make sense of the argument and specific supporting claims in an informational text.
- Use process logs to teach and reinforce students' meta-cognitive skills.
- Have students write about their justification for choosing a citation.
- Have students slow down and articulate what connections they are making in terms of understanding and what reactions they are having in terms of emotions.
- Have students analyze and challenge their own assumptions and biases.
- Have students articulate their emotional reactions in order to avoid limiting their reasoning to what they are feeling.
- Use process logs to explore counter arguments.
- Have students make connections between ideas and passages.
- Use process logs to have students explore their thinking without coming to a definitive conclusion.
- Use process logs to teach students to identify rhetorical appeals, analyze author's purpose, and articulate the effect of the rhetorical appeal on themselves as readers.

Standards Alignment

Process logs are directly aligned with reading and writing standards that ask students to support their interpretations and analysis with valid reasoning and relevant text evidence.

W.1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

W.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

W.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

R.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

R.5: Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g. a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

R.6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

R.8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

W.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

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R.2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

R.10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

When process logs are used as a starting place for class discussion, they directly align with anchor standards for speaking and listening.

SL.1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL.4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

When process logs are used as a starting place for more sustained analytical or informational writing, and/or when they are published electronically, this activity relates directly to additional anchor standards for writing.

W.5: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

W.6: Use technology, including the internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

Model

The following process log is a model developed for an 11th grade English course and based on Emma Lazarus's poem, "The New Colossus."

In this poem, The Statue of Liberty symbolizes and personifies America. Of course, this isn't new at this point in our history; lots of people think of the Statue of Liberty as the ultimate symbol of the American Dream (especially the immigrant dream) and American freedom. Yet I wonder if Lazarus effectively created this symbolism; it must have been a new idea when the statue was dedicated.

I understand that Lazarus is trying to make a break here with the old world, beginning to define America against what it is not. Yet by invoking the Greek Colossus, a symbol of military might, her negation automatically implies its opposite. She links the Greek Colossus to this new Colossus, creating a undercurrent that threatens to upset the patriotic, welcoming language of the rest of the poem. If this is the New Colossus, can we trust it not to become the self-aggrandizing symbol of military might and conquest that characterized the old one? Interesting how the poet's name works here too: Lazarus, raised from the dead, summoning up the Colossus from the death of history. It's also interesting that the form of Lazarus' poem, a Petrarchan sonnet, firmly links it to the old world as well. This is not free, unrestrained verse, but a highly formal poem that owes its shape to a 14th Century Italian.

Lazarus' description of the statue sounds like a goddess – another reference back to the Greek, although her name, "Mother of Exiles" seems almost to invoke the Virgin Mary. The proper title of the statue is "Liberty Enlightening the World," which would imply that the light the Statue holds is the light of Liberty and that her stance and placement at the Eastern-most port of the United States is an invitation to the rest of the world to become more enlightened, more aligned with the principles of Liberty. For Lazarus, however, her light becomes a beacon, an invitation to the Exiles of the world to come and find welcome on her shores. Interesting that her "eyes command the ... harbor." Is she commanding the shores of Europe to keep their "storied pomp" or is she commanding the harbor to admit the Exiles that she beckons home? At any rate, she commands Europe to turn over their Exiles, and it's at this point in the poem that I would be bothered if I were a new immigrant. This poem symbolically greets new immigrants in New York harbor, and how arrogant it sounds! Immigrants are characterized as "tired," "poor," "huddled masses" who can't even "breathe free." So far, I'm developing an image of exhausted, dirty people crowded together so closely that the air is stiflingly moist and hot. Sounds like a hotbed of disease to me and by extension, we begin to see these people as dirty and diseased. Lazarus continues this characterization with "wretched refuse of your teeming shore." These people are the garbage heaped up on the beaches of Europe. How disgusting! Yet the New Colossus invites them in with the promise, "I lift my lamp beside the golden door!" which makes America sound a little like Heaven. Where else are you going to find a golden door?

This poem begins to characterize immigrants for American in the same way that it begins to symbolize American promise for Americans and for the rest of the world. It's no wonder, then, that we have such an on-again, off-again immigration policy in this country. We remained poised, in our national consciousness, between being the guardian angels of freedom for all and safeguarding our values and dreams against those unwashed masses pressing to get in through our hallowed gates.

PROCESS LOG

FREEWriting

*Discuss what you read
and understood:*

- What does this text mean?
- What feelings does the reading evoke?
- What is still confusing?

*Describe how you read
and understand:*

- What did you understand, think, and feel after your first reading?
- What words and phrases made you think and feel that way?
- What questions did you have?
- What words or phrases were confusing?
- What words or phrases helped you to understand?
- What words or phrases seemed especially significant? Can you discuss why?

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- What words or phrases helped you to understand?
- What words or phrases seemed especially significant? Can you discuss why?

DRAMA LOG

Description

A drama log is a specific kind of journal entry that allows students to ask questions, summarize a scene, discuss the significance of a scene within the context of the work as a whole, quote lines and comment on them as they would in a dialogue journal, analyze a character's motivation and relate the analysis to text evidence, discuss the relationship between characters, and discuss their own reactions to dialogue or action.

In their journals, students should write in response to at least **three** of the prompts for a drama log.

Rationale

Drama logs engage students actively in reading plays, which lack the exposition of narrative literary work. Consequently, readers have to use text evidence to infer characters' motivations and make sense of the action in a scene. Students of drama also have the opportunity to think through and articulate potential directorial choices, such as specific character motivation, sets, props, and costuming, extending their analysis by asking them to justify creative choices.

Suggestions for Using this Activity

- Use drama logs as a routine home work assignment when students are reading dramas.
- Have students plan set choices appropriate to their analysis of a play.
- Ask students to track text evidence that supports different interpretations of a character's motivation (e.g. is Hamlet mad, or is Hamlet manipulative?)
- Ask students to explore how tone affects meaning in characters' dialogue as well as how changing tone can change meaning.
- Use drama logs to establish students' own interpretations of choices inherent in drama prior to watching and comparing their interpretations to a theatrical or film production.

Standards Alignment

Drama logs are directly aligned with reading and writing standards that ask students to support their interpretations and analysis with valid reasoning and relevant text evidence.

W.1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

W.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

W.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

W.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

W.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

R.1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

R.2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

R.3: Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

R.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

R.5: Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g. a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

R.6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

R.7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

R.10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

When drama logs are used as a starting place for class discussion, they directly align with anchor standards for speaking and listening.

SL.1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

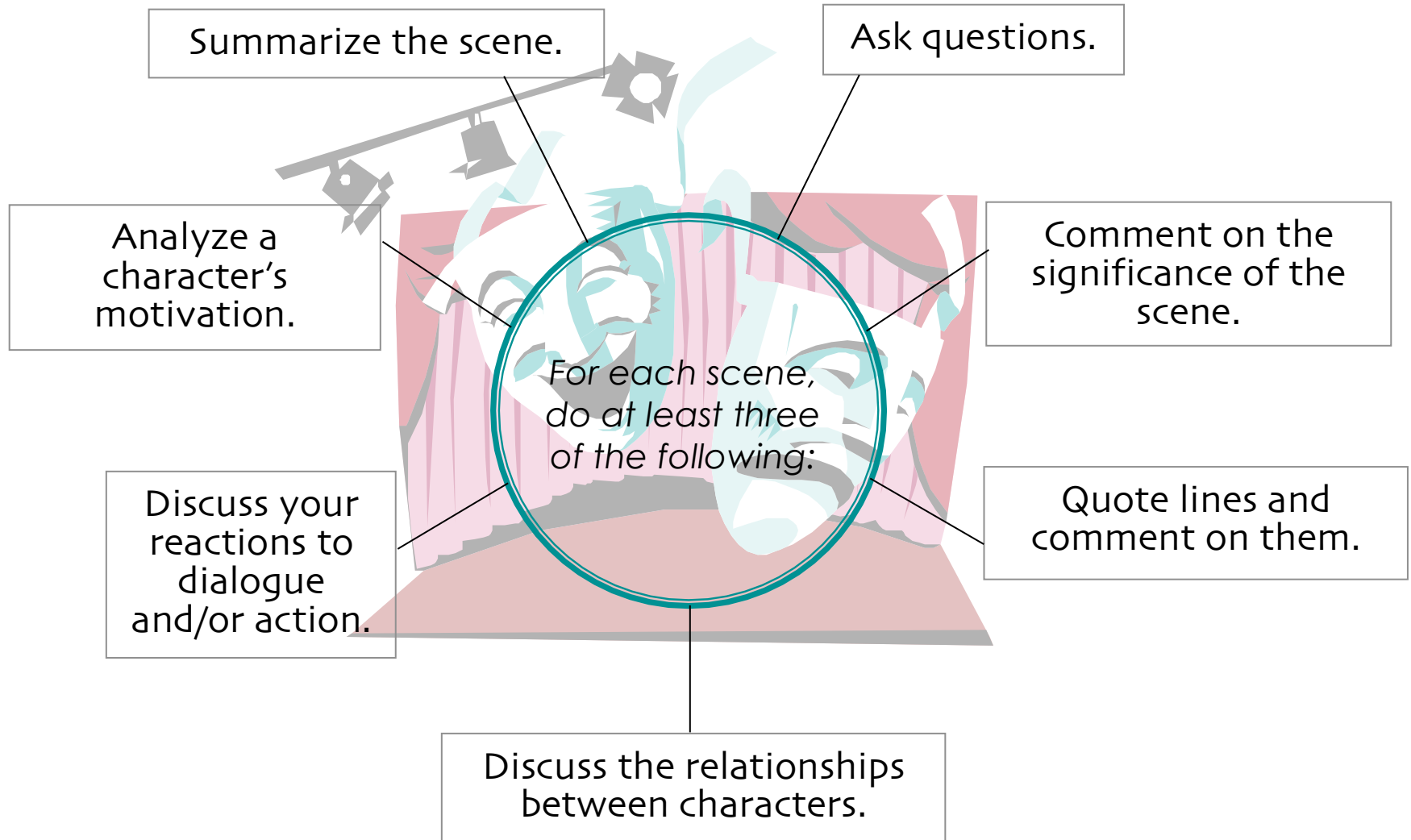
SL.4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

When drama logs are used as a starting place for more sustained analytical or informational writing, and/or when they are published electronically, this activity relates directly to additional anchor standards for writing.

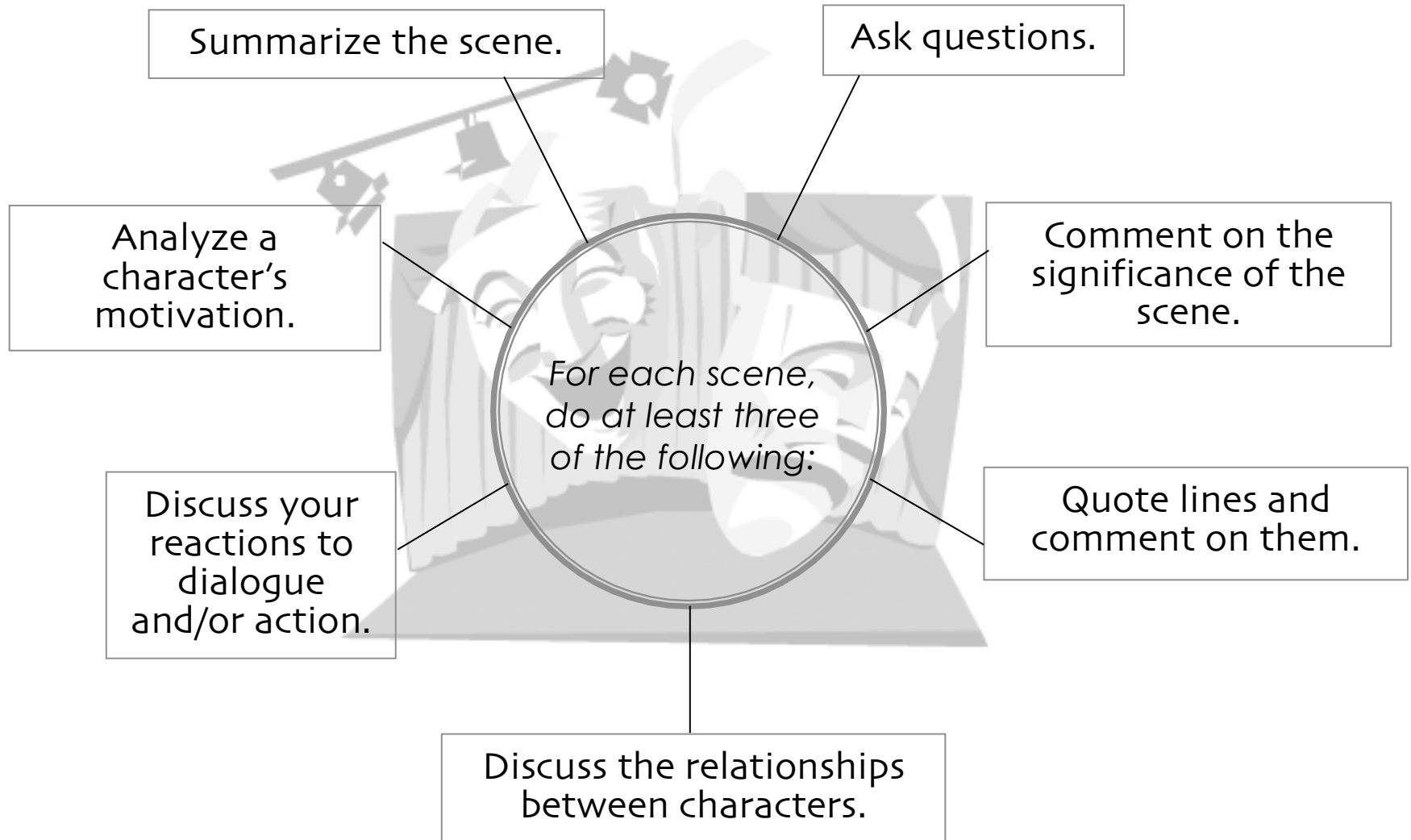
W.5: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

W.6: Use technology, including the internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

DRAMA LOG



DRAMA LOG



RHETORICAL APPEALS

Description

When students work with the rhetorical appeals, they learn to look critically and objectively at texts to determine how the author is using words, phrasing, and imagery to persuade them or influence them in some way.

Working with the rhetorical appeals, students choose a passage from a text or a portion of an image and identify whether it forms an appeal to logic, emotion, or authority.

Students may work with a text annotation strategy such as,

While you read, mark passages in the text that:

- Are an appeal to Logos, or logic (L)
- Are an appeal to Pathos, or emotion (P)
- Are an appeal to Ethos, or authority (E)

Students may also use a dialogue journal to identify passages that demonstrate each of the appeals.

With appeals identified, students should write to analyze their own reaction to a particular passage. How did the particular rhetorical appeal affect them? Is their reaction influenced by prior knowledge or belief?

Students should also take time to identify what is left *out of* the text. Specifically, are counter-claims included? Why or why not?

Students should share their annotations in class to discuss whether or not they have marked passages in the text the same way. Often, the same passage will “fit” with different rhetorical appeals, so this step gives students the ability to discuss their rationale as well as the different effects of a passage on different readers.

For an example of a text that is annotated to illustrate the rhetorical appeals, see the “Color Coded Rhetorical Analysis of Letter from Birmingham Jail” found online at:

[http://faculty.deanza.fhda.edu/schultzmary/stories/storyReader\\$884](http://faculty.deanza.fhda.edu/schultzmary/stories/storyReader$884)

Rationale

People are bombarded with messages on a daily basis that are designed to persuade. Advertising, political messaging, debates, and arguments both for and against controversial subjects are clearly persuasive in nature. Other texts, such as speeches, biographies, and histories, though perhaps not overtly persuasive, are often designed to influence the reader or listener’s beliefs about a subject. Because we are surrounded by persuasive messages, it is important to be able to teach students to think critically about those messages and understand how and why they are influenced by them.

Suggestions for Using this Activity

- Work with rhetorical appeals when students analyze informational text.
- Use text annotation strategies, dialogue journals, and process logs as formative assessments for students' understanding and application of the rhetorical appeals.
- Use the rhetorical appeals to engage students to think critically about advertising messages and images.
- Have students analyze the rhetorical appeals employed by the same author for different audiences. For example, compare and contrast the rhetorical appeals in Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail" to his "I Have a Dream" speech.
- Have students analyze the rhetorical appeals employed by different authors writing on the same topic.
- Build students' awareness of how audience considerations affect a writer or speaker's organization, development, tone, and style.
- Have students slow down and articulate what connections they are making in terms of understanding and what reactions they are having in terms of emotions.
- Have students analyze and challenge their own assumptions and biases.
- Have students articulate their emotional reactions in order to avoid limiting their reasoning to what they are feeling.
- Have students explore their thinking without coming to a definitive conclusion.

Standards Alignment

Analysis of the rhetorical appeals is directly aligned with reading and writing standards that ask students to support their interpretations and analysis with valid reasoning and relevant text evidence as well as reading standards that ask students to assess the validity of a claim as well as how point of view shapes content and style.

W.1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

W.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

W.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

W.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

W.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

R.1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

R.2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

R.5: Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g. a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

R.6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

R.7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

R.8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

R.10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

When analysis of rhetorical appeals is used as a starting place for class discussion, they directly align with anchor standards for speaking and listening.

SL.1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL.2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

SL.4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

When analysis of rhetorical appeals used as a starting place for more sustained analytical or informational writing, and/or when they are published electronically, this activity relates directly to additional anchor standards for writing.

W.5: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

W.6: Use technology, including the internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

RHETORICAL APPEALS

Uses *case studies, cause and effect, statistics* to establish **logical credibility**.

Logos
Appeal
to Logic

Rhetorical
Purpose

Ethos
Appeal
to
Authority

Pathos
Appeal
to
Emotion

Uses voice, tone, credentials to establish an **authoritative voice**.

Uses diction, syntax, claims, evidence, images to **evoke emotion**.

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Uses *case studies, cause and effect, statistics* to establish **logical credibility.**

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Appeal
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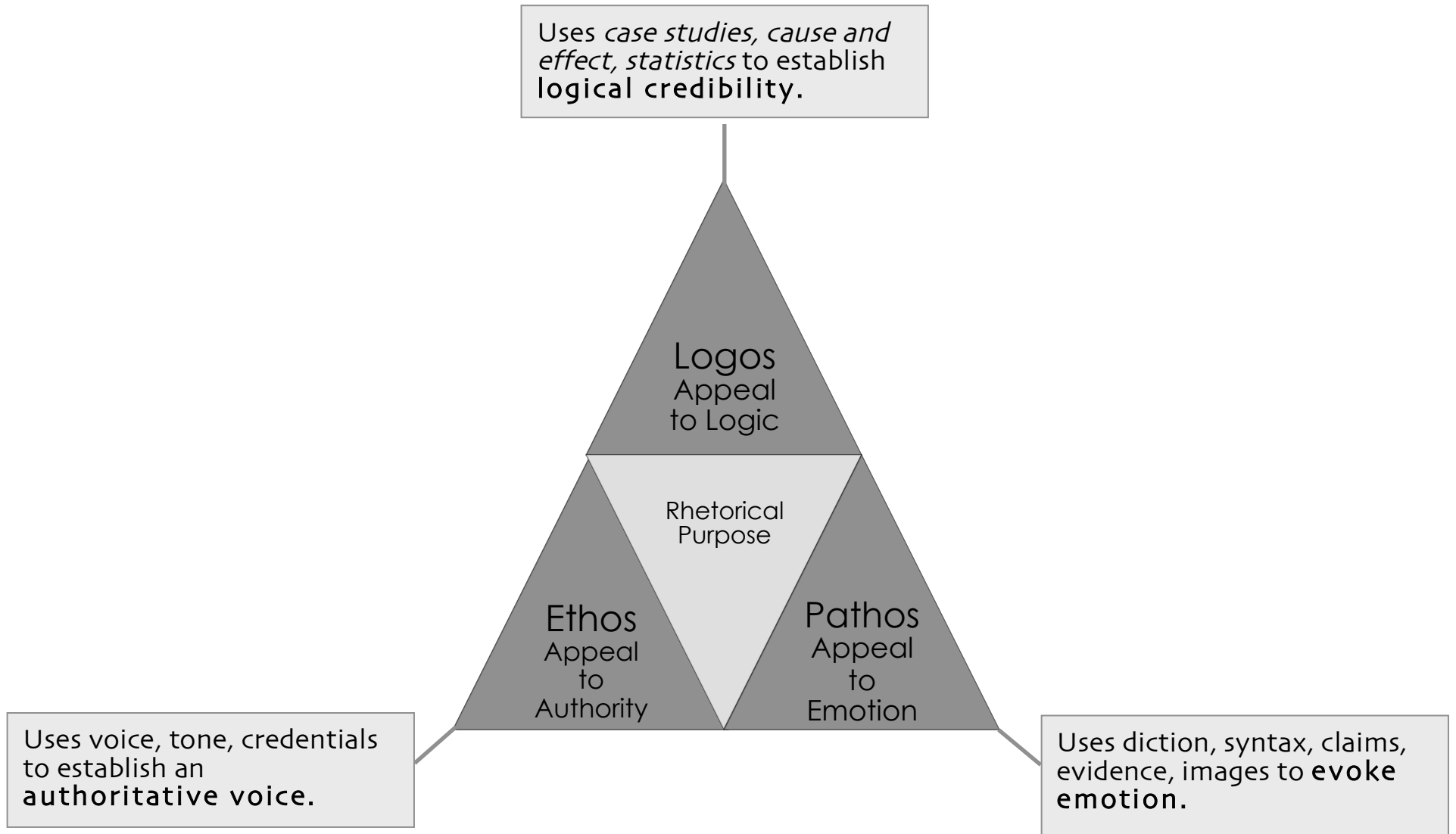
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Uses voice, tone, credentials to establish an **authoritative voice.**

Uses diction, syntax, claims, evidence, images to **evoke emotion.**



CARTOON CHAPTER

Description

A cartoon chapter is a method journaling particularly useful for engaging visual learners. Students have two panels, which they can sub-divide cartoon into two or even three panels if they need less space, to illustrate significant moments in a text, using quotations as captions to anchor their visual interpretations to specific text evidence.

Teachers can provide students with multiple cartoon chapter sheets.

Rationale

A cartoon chapter allows students think creatively as they analyze a text's setting, characters' actions, and relationships between characters. A cartoon chapter engages visual learners in thinking through and expressing their analyses.

Suggestions for Using this Activity

- Use cartoon chapters to help students summarize a scene in a short story or a chapter in a novel.
- Use cartoon chapters to engage younger students in interpreting and analyzing text.
- Have students storyboard their assumptions regarding action, settings, and character relationships within a given scene.
- Have students storyboard their interpretations of a scene. Compare and contrast with a film version of the same text.
- Use cartoon chapters as an alternative journaling assignment for students who are visual learners.
- Use cartoon chapters as a scaffold leading up to students' engagement with dialogue journals.
- Use cartoon chapters to reinforce reading skills such as inference, analysis, or text-to-self connections.

Standards Alignment

Cartoon chapters are directly aligned with reading standards that ask students to support their interpretations and analysis with valid reasoning and relevant text evidence.

R.1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

R.2: Determine central ideas or themes or a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

R.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

R.5: Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g. a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

R.6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

R.7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

R.10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

W.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

When drama logs are used as a starting place for class discussion, they directly align with anchor standards for speaking and listening.

SL.1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL.4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Book Title: _____

Cartoon Chapter:

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Chapter Notes

CHARACTER MAP

Description

The character map is a graphic organizer that helps students organize their analysis of characterization with text evidence that supports specific aspects of characterization.

Students label the center circle with the name of a character. On the spokes that radiate directly outward from the circle, students identify a number of ways in which that character is characterized. Then, on the perpendicular lines that extend from the radial spokes, students record text evidence that builds that characterization. Students may record brief quotes and/or page citations.

In the character notes section, students should record observations of how the character is developed over the course of the text and other observations regarding the character as a whole.

For clarity and a consistent reminder about the variety of ways in which an author creates a character, the footer of the character map includes a comprehensive definition of characterization. This definition can be removed or blocked if you choose not to photocopy that section for your students.

Rationale

Character maps provide a useful tool for organizing observations and claims about characterization and teaching students to support those claims with evidence drawn from the text.

Character maps also provide a way to focus students' attention on the variety of ways in which an author creates character and the tensions that may be created between what a character does and says, for example, and what other characters say about him or her. In this way, character maps are particularly useful for supporting the analysis of how and why characterization develops over the course of a text.

Suggestions for Using this Activity

- Use character maps following focused annotation (see page 6) to synthesize and record students' text evidence related to characterization.
- Use character maps during a novel study to record the ways in which complex characters are developed over the course of a text.
- Include character maps along with significance statements in a comprehensive reading inventory or portfolio that each student maintains over the course of a full year of instruction.
- Use the character map to focus students' attention on one particular way that an author creates character (e.g. characterization that comes exclusively from what the character does as opposed to what the character thinks and feels).
- Focus attention on the tensions within characterization between what a character does, what a character thinks and feels, and what other characters or the narrator say about the character.

Standards Alignment

Character maps are directly aligned with reading standards that ask students to support their interpretations and analysis with valid reasoning and relevant text evidence.

R.1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

R.3: Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

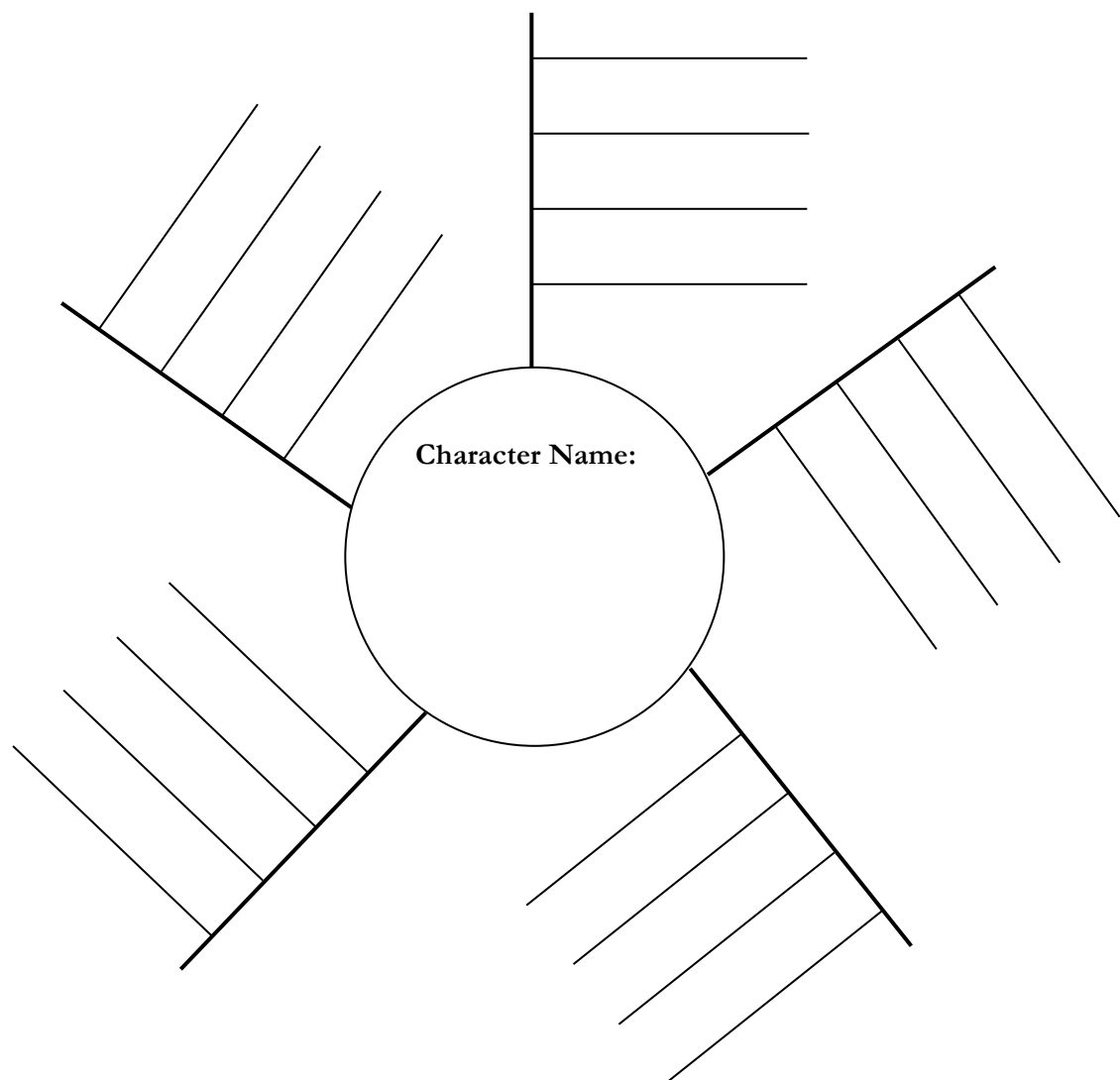
R.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

R.6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

R.10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

W.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Character Map



Character Notes:

Characterization: The creation of imaginary persons so that they seem lifelike. An author creates a character through (1) *exposition*, or the narrator’s direct statements about the character, (2) *what the character says and does*, (3) *the character’s thoughts and feelings*, and (4) *what other characters say* about that character.

FILM VIEWING NOTES

Description

Film viewing notes provide a method of note-taking that directs students' attention to important aspects of film craft. Students have nine defined categories, including elements such as music and sound and mise en scene, in relation to which they should record their observations while viewing a film.

Rationale

Film is an art form that is a significant medium for story-telling in our society, yet, too often, students approach film as mere entertainment. Film viewing notes support teachers who want to introduce a film version of a text for comparison or who want to work with a film in class as a text in and of itself.

Suggestions for Using this Activity

- Use film viewing notes to focus students' attention on elements that create setting, characterization, and mood and compare these elements to a text version of the same story.
- Analyze film versions of a text as an interpretation of the original.
- Have students critique the director's choices, explaining and justifying their alternatives.
- Isolate each element on the film viewing notes sheet and show students an illustrative film clip to teach each of the elements.
- Pre-select film clips that illustrate the elements on the note-taking sheet. Pause the film during viewing and discuss. Direct students to find and annotate another place in the film that illustrates each of the elements.
- Use the notes sheet to organize evidence drawn from the film and have students include film evidence in their analytical essays.
- Have students articulate their emotional reactions in order to avoid limiting their reasoning to what they are feeling.
- Include film viewing notes in students' comprehensive reading inventories or portfolios.

Standards Alignment

Film viewing notes are directly aligned with reading standards that ask students to support their interpretations and analysis with valid reasoning and relevant text evidence.

R.1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

R.3: Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

R.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

R.6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

R.7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

R.10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

W.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Viewing Notes

Film Title:

Director:

FRAMING: Include observations of interesting shots and camera angles as well as their effects.	
EDITING: Include observations of interesting editing techniques and their effects.	
MUSIC & SOUND: Make note of the effect of music and other non-diegetic sound. Make note of diegetic sound if needed.	
LIGHTING: Make note of places where you see particularly interesting lighting choices. Be sure to describe the lighting effect.	
CHARACTERIZATION: Include observations about behavior, appearance, dialogue, and directorial choices affecting your understanding of character.	
SETTING: Include details of setting and their potential effect on characterization as well as directorial choices affecting your understanding of setting.	
VISUAL MOTIFS: Include your observations of various visual motifs and symbols.	
MISE EN SCENE: Include your observations of theatrical elements like costume, props, sets, etc.	
PERSONAL RESPONSE: Include your emotional and intellectual reaction to the film. Start with whether you liked or dislike it.	

DOCUMENTARY VIEWING NOTES

Description

Documentary viewing notes provide a method of note-taking that help students focus on a documentary film as a form of informational text. Students take notes regarding the factual information presented in the film and significant quotations from the film. Students relate factual information, the ways in which the film presents that factual information, and quotations from the film to articulate the documentary's central message.

Rationale

Documentary is a significant medium for presenting persuasive and informative messages in our society and can be treated as relevant informational text. If students have previously been introduced to the elements of film craft, they can apply their understanding of techniques such as framing, editing, lighting, and music and sound to extend their analysis of a documentary film.

Suggestions for Using this Activity

- Have students articulate the main idea expressed in the documentary.
- Have students identify whether a documentary is persuasive, informative, or both.
- Use the notes sheet to organize evidence drawn from the documentary and have students include this evidence in their analytical essays.
- Include documentary viewing notes in students' comprehensive reading inventories or portfolios.
- Have students apply their previous learning about film elements to deepen their analysis of the central message of the documentary.
- Have students analyze and challenge their own assumptions and biases.
- Have students articulate their emotional reactions in order to avoid limiting their reasoning to what they are feeling.
- Use viewing notes to track counter arguments.
- Have students make connections between ideas and film elements (e.g. framing).
- Use viewing notes to have students explore their thinking without coming to a definitive conclusion.
- Use viewing notes to teach students to identify rhetorical appeals in film, analyze the director's purpose, and articulate the effect of the director's choices on themselves as viewers.

Standards Alignment

Documentary viewing notes are directly aligned with reading standards that ask students to support their interpretations and analysis with valid reasoning and relevant text evidence.

R.1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

- R.3:** Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
- R.4:** Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
- R.6:** Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.
- R.7:** Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
- R.10.** Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.
- W.9:** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Viewing Notes

Film Title:

Director:

INFORMATION:

Write down your observations about interesting or surprising information in the film.

QUOTES:

Write down interesting quotes from the film.
What do the people who are interviewed on camera add to the meaning of the film?

DOCUMENTARY

MESSAGE:

What is the documentary filmmaker trying to say in this film? How does s/he communicate that message?
Include observations about the visual images contained in the film as well as editing techniques.

TEXT CONNECTIONS

Description

Text connections ask students to bring together the individual analyses and text evidence from materials that the teacher has grouped together and synthesize them into a coherent central idea, or thesis. Making text connections can begin with simple compare and contrast structures. However, asking student to make text connections ultimately asks them to move beyond compare / contrast and engage in analysis that uses multiple sources to synthesize new understanding or make an original claim.

Text connections begins with students' work with individual texts. Ideally, teachers have grouped texts of different types and media together into units of instruction that explore a theme and are bound together by an essential question.

Throughout the unit of study, students should write routinely to analyze the central message in individual texts and develop bodies of text evidence.

Text connections help students organize what they see as the central message and relevant evidence for multiple texts, allowing them to compare and contrast, juxtapose, and synthesize ideas and evidence, thus forming the basis of a broad and original claim.

Text connections require summative essay prompts that demand evidence from multiple texts and are broad enough to encompass the work contained in an entire unit of study, yet flexible enough to be answered using a variety of text combinations.

Rationale

Tasks that ask students to synthesize information and ideas from a variety of sources promote higher order thinking skills, and the Common Core standards very specifically and consistently point to analysis and synthesis as markers of literacy at the college and career ready level. The Common Core asks us to teach students to make connections between and among texts in order to integrate knowledge and ideas.

Specifically, too, the Common Core asks us to give students opportunities to compare, contrast, juxtapose, and synthesize information from diverse sources, including literature, informational text, film, live productions, electronic media, and works of art. For the purpose of this activity, we label all of these sources as “text,” as they can all be read, analyzed, and interpreted.

Suggestions for Using this Activity

- Scaffold the development of analytical essays that form their arguments using multiple texts.
- Have students make connections such as:
 - Literary text (novel, short stories, poetry) – Literary text
 - Literary text – Informational text (same topic)
 - Literary text – Film

- Literary text – Painting
- Written play – Performance of play
- Literary text – Autobiography
- Art (sculpture, paintings, pottery etc.) – Autobiography
- Literary text – Music

Standards Alignment

Text connections are directly aligned with reading and writing standards that ask students to support their interpretations and analysis with valid reasoning and relevant text evidence. Text connections are also directly aligned with reading

W.1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

W.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

W.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

W.5: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

W.6: Use technology, including the internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

W.7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

W.8: Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

W.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

W.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

R.1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

R.2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

R.3: Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

R.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

R.5: Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g. a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

R.6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

R.7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

R.8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

R.9: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

R.10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

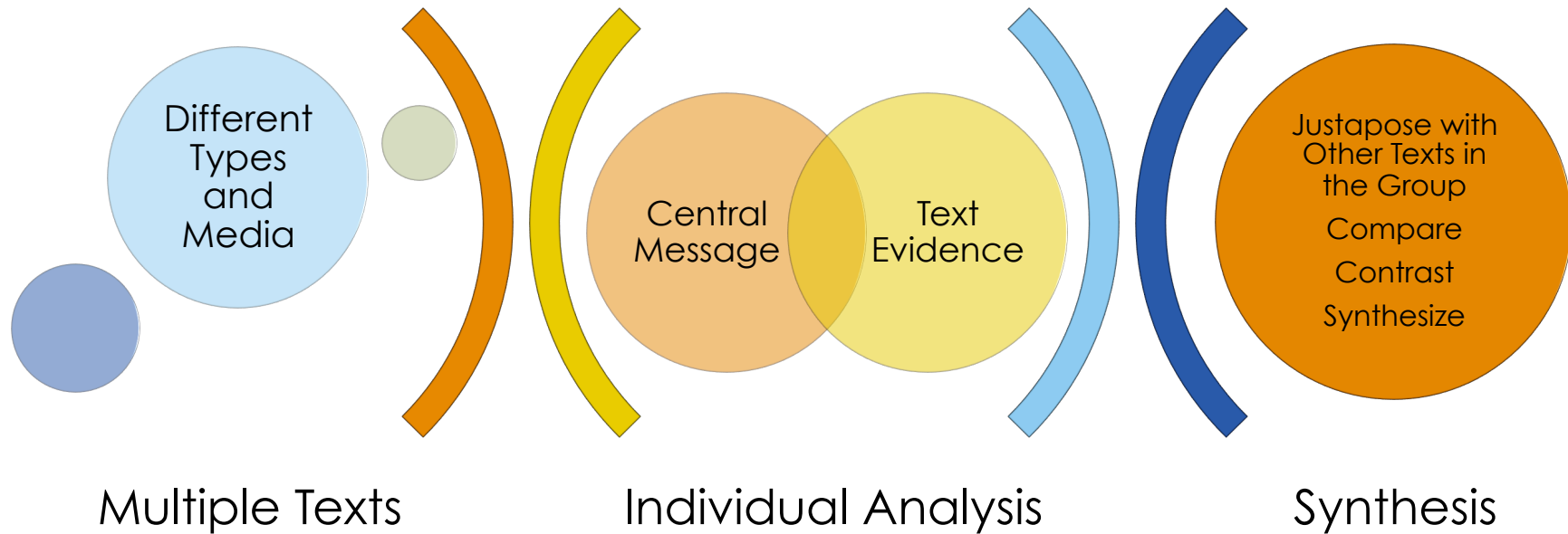
When text connections are used as a starting place for class discussion, they directly align with anchor standards for speaking and listening.

SL.1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

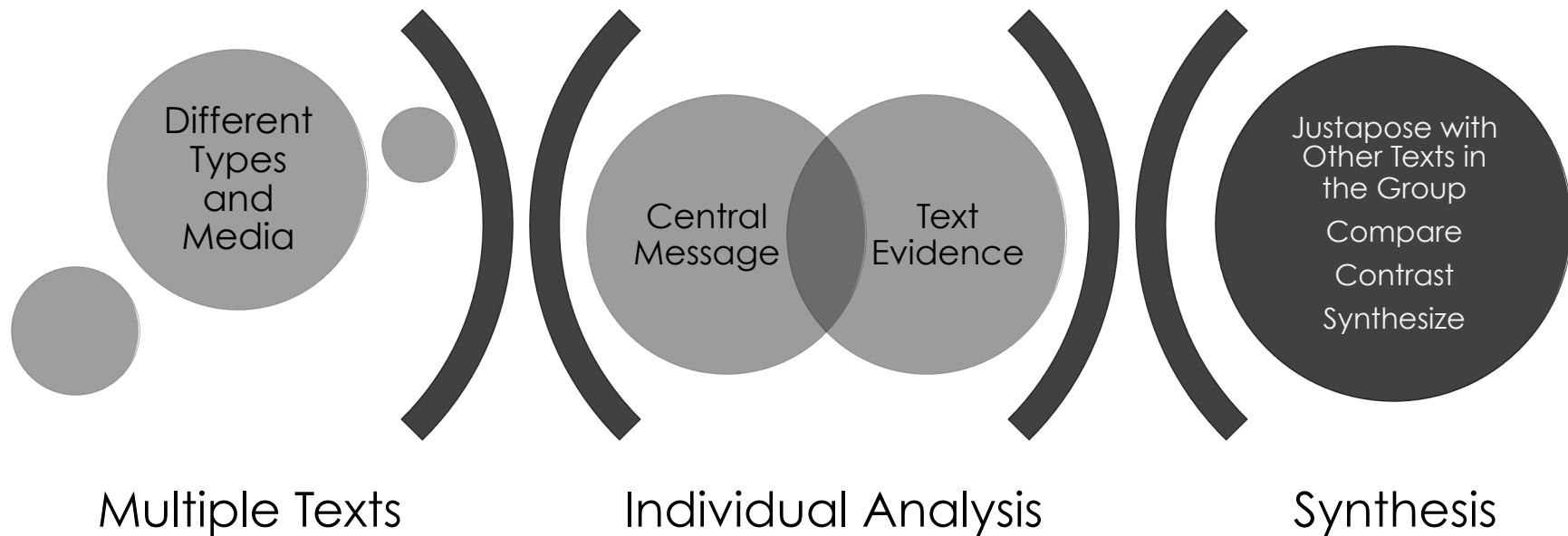
SL.2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

SL.4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

TEXT CONNECTIONS



TEXT CONNECTIONS



VOCABULARY CONNECTIONS

Description

Using the vocabulary connections method, students routinely and consistently write a new word and its denotation, then connect the word to a synonym and antonym. Students can also connect a new word with a “reminds me of” word or phrase.

Vocabulary is drawn from the class’s weekly reading material, establishing authentic context for the acquisition and reinforcement of new words. Students record the sentence from their reading that contains the vocabulary word to provide an exemplar of usage.

During vocabulary study, students should explore connotations of the week’s words whenever appropriate, as well as relevant word roots and etymology. Students should also practice writing original sentences that demonstrate their understanding of the word’s meaning.

Teachers can establish a vocabulary routine in their classrooms whereby new words are put up in a word bank or on a vocabulary wall at the beginning of the week, vocabulary connections and review occur one or two days later, and a vocabulary quiz is given at the end of the week.

Rationale

When students are reading grade-level texts, as demanded by the Common Core standards, they should be exposed to rich vocabulary. Importantly, this kind of exposure establishes an authentic context for vocabulary acquisition and reinforcement, as opposed to the decontextualized vocabulary presented in workbook series.

Teaching vocabulary this way requires more up-front work from teachers, as it is up to us as educators to identify texts that will help expand our students’ vocabulary and choose words from the text to form the basis of weekly vocabulary study. Teaching vocabulary this way, however, helps to expand students’ *working* vocabularies.

New vocabulary words are linked to other known words to reinforce knowledge acquisition. Brain-based research indicates that new knowledge is more effectively assimilated and more easily retrieved when it is linked to other, pre-existing knowledge. When new words are taught using vocabulary connections, students are actively linking new, unknown vocabulary words to their established network of knowledge.

With this method, the responsibility for looking up a new word and identifying synonyms and antonyms is placed on the student. The teacher’s role is to clarify misunderstandings, discuss roots and/or etymology, push students to identify connotation, and coach students as they learn to use new vocabulary in original sentences. Teachers should go out of their way to use new (as well as previous weeks’) vocabulary words to reinforce students’ understanding and usage.

Suggestions for Using this Activity

- Use the vocabulary connections format as a routine method of teaching new words.
- Build routine vocabulary assessments that require students to connect new vocabulary words to known synonyms or antonyms.
- Assess students' vocabulary acquisition by requiring them to use new words in original sentences that clearly demonstrate the word's meaning.
- Use technology tools, such as VisualThesaurus.com, to expand the range of students' vocabulary connections.
- Discuss the connotation as well as denotation of vocabulary words.
- Relate etymology to a word's denotation and connotation.
- Discuss vocabulary roots, prefixes, and suffixes.
- Discuss the multiple meanings that a word may have.
- Have students infer meaning from context before looking up a new word in a dictionary or thesaurus.
- Clarify pronunciation. Discuss words with more than one accepted pronunciation.
- Clarify part of speech.
- Call attention to homonyms.

Standards Alignment

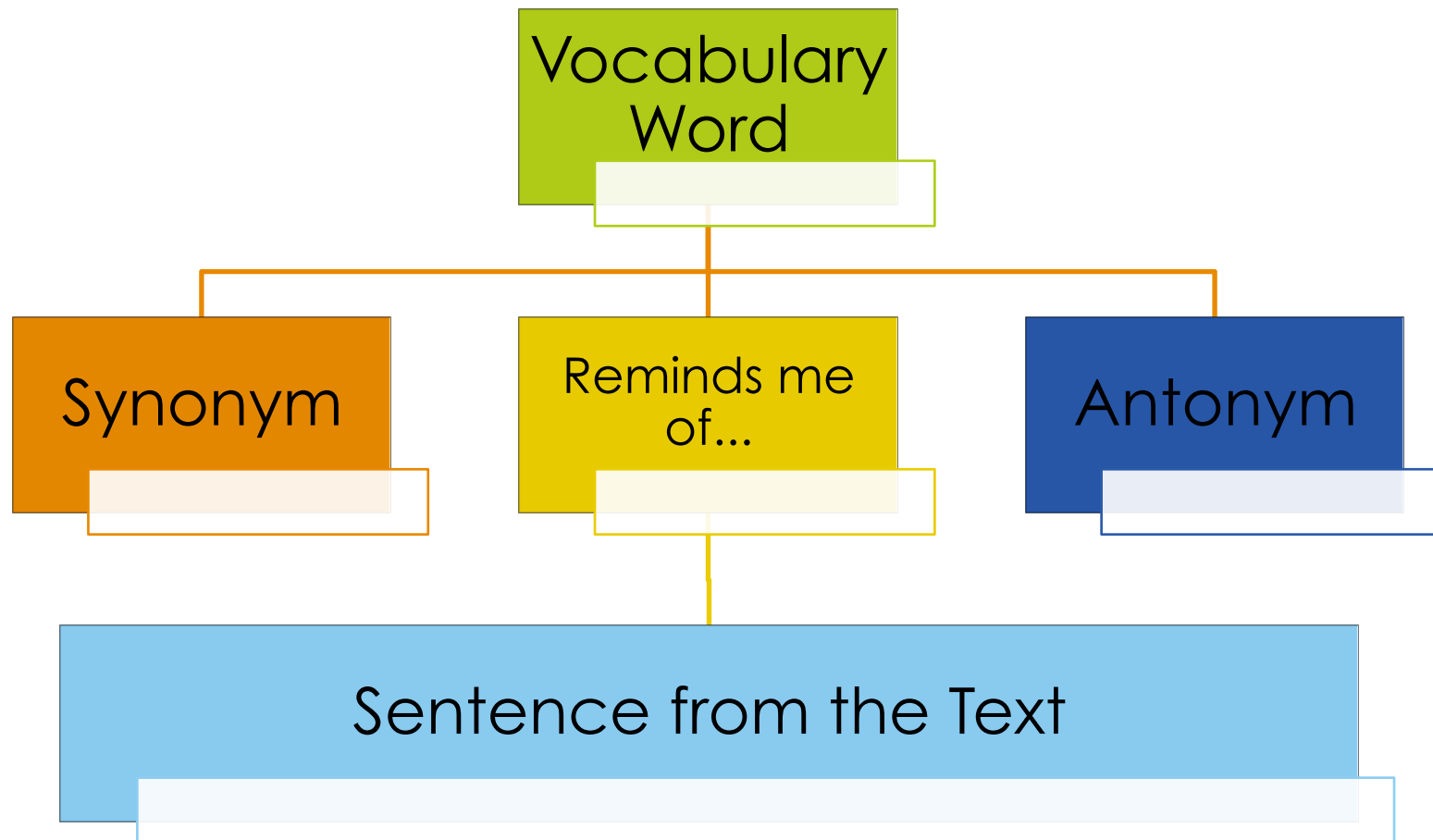
The vocabulary connections activity is directly aligned with reading standards that ask students to interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text and develop awareness of connotative and figurative meaning.

R.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

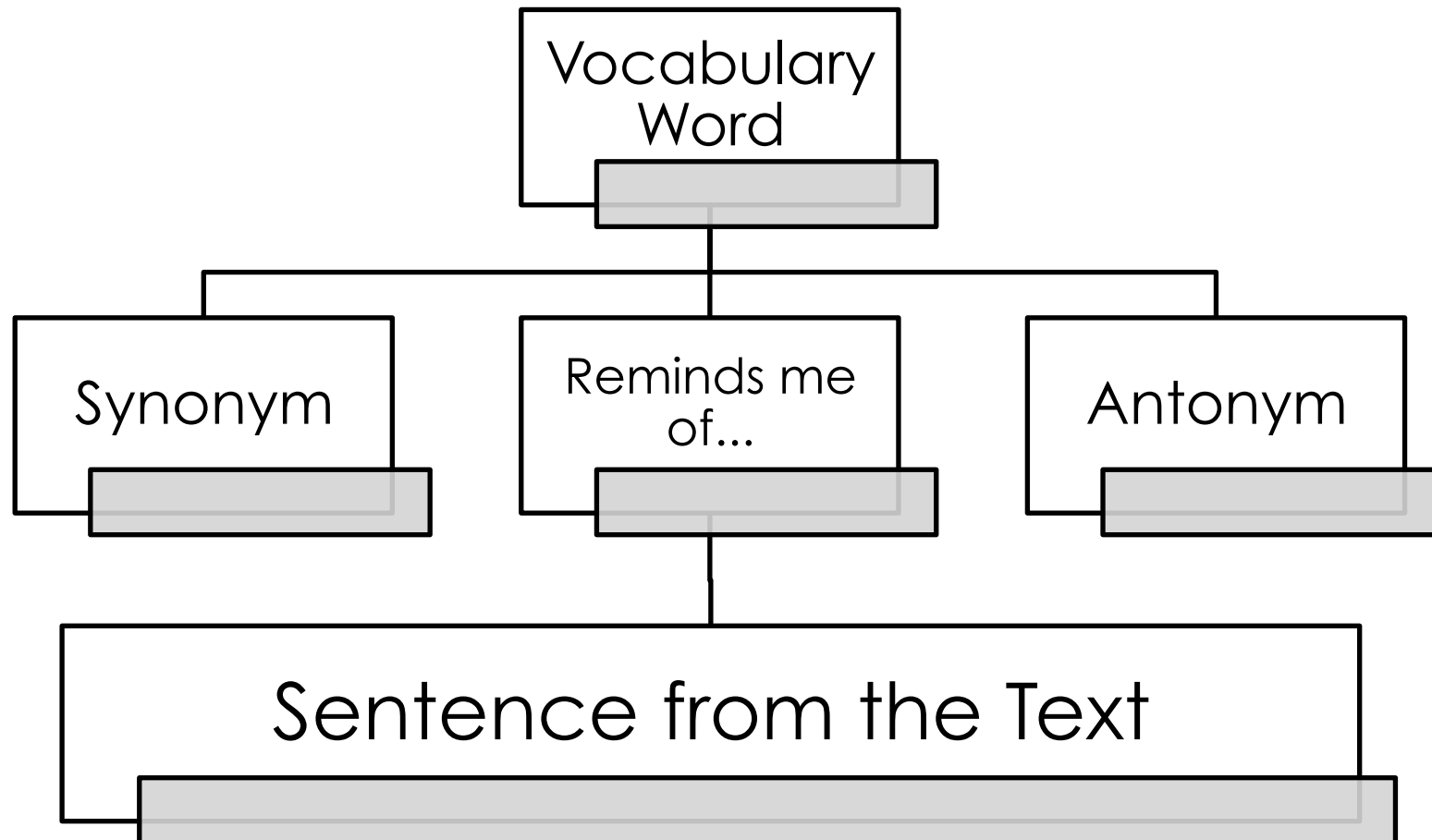
Because an awareness of connotation and denotation also helps students infer beyond what the text says explicitly, the vocabulary connections activity is also indirectly aligned with reading standards that ask students to read closely and draw conclusions about implicit meaning.

R.1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

VOCABULARY CONNECTIONS



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